

Scholar's Theory About New Zealand Youth

'Discipline May Make Delinquents'

A visiting American educationist has suggested that too much discipline and repression in New Zealand secondary schools may be a cause of "Bodgieism" (rowdy adolescence) and delinquency, Reuter reports.

Dr. David P. Ausubel, of Illinois University, told a psychologists' conference in Wellington: "Bodgieism is a response to badgering and bullying in secondary schools."

Dr. Ausubel, a Fulbright scholar who is the father of three children attending New Zealand secondary schools, criticised the "sanctimonious notion" among the New Zealand public that juvenile delinquency within the country must, of necessity, have an overseas origin.

The causes of local delinquency, he said, are local. He blamed school uniforms, exaggerated deference to teachers, the use of corporal punishment and the prefect system.

Insufficient opportunity existed for pupils to achieve status in school government and extracurricular activities. In contrast, the entire social life of American youth was organised around such activities.

Co-education

Of co-education, Dr. Ausubel said: "New Zealand primary schools are genuinely co-educational but, as strong interest develops in the opposite sex, there is relatively little opportunity for boys and girls to meet." Under these circumstances, the milk-bar was the only place where boys and girls could mix socially.

Dr. Ausubel defined New Zealand's social problem, the bodgie, as a "teenage cultist with a distinctive haircut and costume who frequents milk-bars, races around on a motorcycle and may or may not be engaged in delinquent activity." Adolescent cultism, he said, was more extreme in New Zealand than in the United States and more closely related to delinquent behaviour.

Uniform Tradition

He added: "New Zealand juvenile delinquency is more closely linked with the Teddy-boy movement in Great Britain and the bodgie movement in Australia."

Of these criticisms Dr. Clarence Beeby, New Zealand's

Director of Education, said there was no evidence that too much discipline was the reason for bodgieism. There might be more reason to suppose that the cause was insufficient discipline.

"My own impression is that bodgies and widdies (the girls) mostly come from youngsters who are slow in school and leave early," he said.

A high-school headmaster, Mr. E. G. Smith, said the important difference between American and British concepts was that the British accepted uniforms as tradition, while Americans felt that individuality was of paramount importance.

Answering widespread criticism Dr. Ausubel said: "I do not lay the entire blame on secondary schools. Certain secondary school practices might be among the many causes of delinquency."

Detective Saw Twins Had Changed Dresses

A Nottingham store detective questioned twin girls because he first saw them dressed alike but shortly afterwards saw one in blue and the other in white and yellow, Mr. Henry Massey, prosecuting, said at Nottingham yesterday.

Ella and Doreen Colley (17), of Newstead Road, Long Eaton, Derbyshire, pleaded guilty to three charges of theft and each was fined a total of £10 and placed on probation for three years.

Mr. Massey said that the girls admitted to the detective on Saturday that they had stolen the dresses and changed into them in a cloakroom. The girls were said by the police to have appeared together three times before Long Eaton Juvenile Court.

'Jackdaw Man' Cannot Appeal

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29 Dec 2024